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LIVING MASTERS OF MUSIC
EDITED BY ROSA NEWMARCH

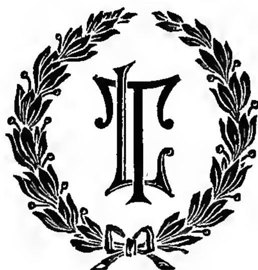
THEODOR LESCHETIZKY

"If you choose to play!—is my principle
Let a man contend to the uttermost
For his life's set prize, be it what it will."

BROWNING

THEODOR LESCHETIZKY

BY ANNETTE HULLAH



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LESCHETIZKY AT THE PIANO . . *Frontispiece*

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CHAPTER I

1830 TO 1862

THEODOR LESCHETIZKY was born in Poland at the Castle of Lancut, near Lemberg, June 22, 1830. His father, a Bohemian by birth, held the position of music-master to the family of Potocka. His mother, Theresa von Ullmann, was a Pole.

The Potocki had luxurious tastes. They were cultivated people, who cared for beautiful things, and were rich enough to have them. The Castle itself, a fine old building, stood in the middle of a large park, surrounded by trees and plenty of open land ; it contained a picture-gallery and a private theatre. This was the home in which Leschetizky passed his childhood, seeing life as a delightful thing, full of grace and ease, which might have been quite perfect had there been no music lessons. But at the age of five he began to learn the piano,

and had to study two hours a day from the beginning. He loved music intensely, and might even have loved practising; but his father, according to the parental custom of the day, was so extremely severe that the lessons were a misery to both, and, but for his mother's gentle help, might have ended in his hating the instrument altogether.

In spite of such troubles, his progress was extraordinary. In four years he was ready to play in public, and made his first appearance at an orchestral concert in Lemberg. He played a Concertino of Czerny, and created a considerable sensation; "but," he says, "I cannot remember very much about the music, because at the time my mind was entirely taken up with the rats." Concerts were given so rarely in those days that any place was considered fit to play in. Leschetizky's first concert-room—probably a little more primitive than most—was built of wood; the light came in through the cracks, and the floor was full of holes, through which climbed the aforesaid rats in hundreds, running about fearlessly, not only during rehearsal, but at the concert itself.

After this exciting début Leschetizky went

about playing everywhere, and very quickly became famous as a "wonder-child." Everybody talked about him and wanted to hear him; great ladies borrowed him for their salons when they could, and fêted and spoilt him, as great ladies always do—all of which he enjoyed as much as they did.

When he was ten, his father, pensioned by the Potocka, took his family to live in Vienna, where they were already accustomed to spend the winter. Joseph Leschetizky's post in the Potocka household had given him the opportunity of meeting all the great artists of the time who frequented their salon; and in this way Theodore had been able to hear the best music from his earliest boyhood. For a year the boy continued to study at home with his father, after which he went to the great Czerny, whose school was so famous in those days, and to which many of the greatest artists, such as Liszt, Thalberg, Döhler, Kullak, and Hiller, had belonged.

Himself a fine pianist, Czerny had been a pupil of Clementi and an intimate friend and pupil of Beethoven; "a fact of which he was very proud," says Leschetizky. "So often, indeed, did he speak of him to me that I

always felt as if I had known him myself." In the same indirect way he became spiritually acquainted with Chopin, whose pupil Filtsch was his great friend. A little older than Leschetizky, Filtsch was already a beautiful player, whom Chopin loved, of whom he thought highly, and who would assuredly have become famous had he lived. Leschetizky's readings of the lighter compositions of Chopin are for the most part inspired by the remembrance of what he assimilated from this gifted boy, and he has changed his rendering very little since those days. Czerny cared little for Chopin, either as pianist or composer, nor did he willingly teach his music. His mind was too limited to understand subtlety, and he felt for it the contempt the plain man always feels for what he cannot grasp.

At fourteen Leschetizky began to take pupils himself, and seems to have been a prodigy in teaching as well as in playing, for he had soon so much to do that his time was quite filled up. His father took two rooms for him next door, so that he might carry on his musical work without disturbing the household. He was very busy, for, besides the teaching and his

own practice, there were lessons from Sechter in counterpoint and, until his voice broke, he sang in a church choir two or three times a week. He played everywhere. He was known in Metternich's salon, to Thalberg, to the great Liszt, whom he worshipped, to the Court, to Donizetti, who encouraged his early attempts at composition, in fact to all the great artists who passed through Vienna.

It was at this time that he heard Schulhoff play one evening at Dessauer's house. It was a new experience. Hitherto he had heard nothing like it. To phenomenal technique he was quite accustomed—fireworks could no longer disturb his equanimity—but the poetry, exquisite finish and simplicity of Schulhoff's playing touched something within him that till then had lain dormant, and he recognised at once the incompleteness of his own work.

Schulhoff, though not a pupil of Chopin, knew him well in Paris, and had caught something of his manner; yet it was not this—already familiar to Leschetizky through Filtsch—but his marvellous power of making the piano "sing" that brought to the boy the vision of a new world. The public did not

understand Schulhoff at first. They rather despised this pianist, who played to them in a perfectly simple way. They missed their runs and trills and surging octave passages, and found him dull. Not so Leschetizky. Here was a pianist who had gone further, and attained to something higher than the rest. He too must reach the same plane. For months he worked, refusing to play in public till he had gained what he had been searching for, and when he emerged from his exile, not only his playing, but his point of view had entirely altered.

Up to this time, in spite of Filtsch's influence, he had, like others, been satisfied that "the perfect finger" was the desirable thing; now he recognised a finer ideal. The change in him was to be of farther reaching influence than he dreamt of at the time, for it filtered through him to his pupils and created in them the germ of what developed later into the famous Leschetizky School. Schulhoff's visit marked an epoch in Leschetizky's life.

In the same year he took a course in law at the University; and this together with his

pupils kept him so busy that he was obliged to read hard into the early morning hours to get through the double work.

When the Revolution of 1848 came—putting an end to all music in the city for the time being—he was ready for a holiday. Having also hurt his arm in a duel, therefore unable to practise, he decided to take this opportunity of seeing something of the world. He did not see much of it, for he went to Italy, and promptly fell so deeply in love with everything—and everybody—there, that he had to be removed from the source of danger; and a faithful friend hastily took him back to the Austrian mountains and kept him there, till both his mind and his city were calm enough to permit a safe return to ordinary life.

For four years he worked away steadily at his teaching, playing much besides, and leading the gay social life his genial nature loved. He also composed his first opera, "Die Bruder von San Marco." Meyerbeer, to whom he played it, thought it showed great promise, and urged him to finish it, but this he never cared to do, and the work still remains as he left it then.

In 1852 Leschetizky decided to go to Russia, and set out in September of that year.

His début at the Michael Theatre in St. Petersburg resulted in a small circle of pupils, which very soon grew into a large one. His fame as a pianist had already preceded him, and shortly after his arrival he was commanded to play before Nicholas I.

He tells of the magnificent carriage sent to convey him to the palace, of the sumptuous apartment and dainty supper to greet him when he got there and, alas, of the intolerable piano, upon which he flatly refused to play, and went home instead. Expecting to be ordered out of Russia, a little later on he received to his surprise a second invitation, accompanied this time by no beautiful carriage, and graced by only a very meagre supper served in a miserable little bedroom. But the piano was all he could wish, and he played on it so much to their Majesties' satisfaction that, his sins forgiven, bedtime discovered him once more in the gorgeous apartment of his first visit.

He was very happy in his Russian life. He had many friends, and among them Anton

Rubinstein. As boys they had played together in Vienna, now as young men they were to work together in St. Petersburg. Rubinstein was concert-master at the Court of the Grand Duchess Helen, the sister of the Emperor Nicholas. Soon after Leschetizky came to Russia, Rubinstein wishing to go on tour, asked him to take his place until his return. Leschetizky agreed to do so, on the understanding that he could live in his own rooms instead of staying in the palace, and be allowed to go on with his private teaching at home. Life would have been intolerable to him had his freedom been curtailed. His duties were to arrange all the music at Court, to give singing lessons to the daughter of the Grand Duchess, and to one of her Maids of Honour—Madlle. de Fridebourg, who possessed one of the most beautiful voices he had ever heard. In 1856 he married this lady. Sixteen years later they were divorced.

Leschetizky's connection with the Grand Duchess brought him into touch with all the great artists who visited St. Petersburg. The Grand Duchess Helen was a remarkable woman, who exercised considerable influence

over the political affairs of Russia and made her palace the centre of culture in the capital. Of wide sympathies and unusual intellectual gifts, she was fitted to be the leader of any sphere she might choose to rule. Men and women from all parts of Europe—military, diplomatic, artistic—visited her salon. She it was who started the Russian Imperial Musical Society which, under Rubinstein's directorship, eventually founded the Conservatoire; and it was in a large measure owing to her influence that Rubinstein, Kologrivov, and others were able to carry out their schemes for educating the people to a knowledge of good music.

St. Petersburg was very far behind the rest of Europe in regard to the status of the musical profession when Leschetizky first went there. It was not regarded as an honourable career at all, nor even as a serious study. The rich patronised it because it was fashionable; the bargeman on the river chanted his song as he went because he loved it; but its cultivation as an art was in no sense a conscious necessity of Russian life.

Outside aristocratic circles there was little or

no music, scarcely any one who thought it worth while to make it his life-work. No one knew anything about the generation of young native composers then growing up. Even Glinka's popularity had waned, and Dargomijsky and Balakirev were hardly more than names. The orchestra of the Symphony Concerts—given but two or three times in the year by the Court Chapel—was made up of students, clerks, or any one who could play, and liked to spend his leisure in that way. Till 1850, when Rubinstein inaugurated the Sunday Concerts, there were no public orchestral performances outside the Court at all; and even twelve years later, when the Conservatoire was started, musical life was but just awakening, and a little knowledge of the art spreading through the city. The ignorance of people in general was incredible. Leschetizky tells an amusing story to illustrate this.

One day a rich tradesman came to one of his musical friends to ask what his terms would be for giving pianoforte lessons to his daughter. He named his price. "Well," said the tradesman, "that certainly is expensive—but does it include the black keys as well as the white?"

In a comparatively short time the condition of musical affairs improved immensely, for the people at once took advantage of the opportunity to hear and learn, and Leschetizky's popularity as a teacher increased so rapidly that very soon it became impossible for him to take all the pupils himself, and he found it necessary to train some of them to work under him as assistants.

In 1862, when the St. Petersburg Conservatoire was opened with Anton Rubinstein as director, Leschetizky transferred his class there. Though among the pioneers who actively interested themselves in its development as a means of popularising the study of music, Leschetizky was more taken up with pupils in particular than pupils in general. He sympathised to a certain extent with Rubinstein's plans for the improvement of the musical condition of the country; at the same time his nature, more individualist and less philanthropic than his friend's, preferred to work in a smaller field. He could devote himself heart and soul to watching and tending the unfolding of any young talent, but not to the education of the masses; and it is well that it

was so, for otherwise a specialist would have been lost to the world. His chief care was that each pupil entrusted to him should develop to the best of his ability; if pianism in general incidentally benefited by the system of study he had built up, so much the better.

CHAPTER II

1862–1905

DURING these years Leschetizky played a great deal in public. He was famous all over Russia, Austria, and Germany, both as pianist and teacher, and pupils collected to join his class from every part of Europe.

In his capacity as Capellmeister he had also to fill the part of conductor. In speaking of this part of his career he says: "Conducting is not difficult. It is harder to play six bars well on the piano than to conduct the whole of the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven." In illustration of this view he relates how, when he was once conducting the Schumann Concerto, Rubinstein, who was taking the solo, suddenly forgot the music so completely that Leschetizky was obliged to stop the orchestra. On rushed Rubinstein, playing anything that came into his head, till he found himself

LESCHETIZKY'S HOUSE IN VIENNA

in the Cadenza, when Leschetizky at once passed the word round the orchestra to be ready to come in with the theme, if Rubinstein ever got there. Rubinstein did get there. Leschetizky brought down the stick, and all went merrily to the end. On another occasion he had to conduct an overture that he had never seen; but he ran it over in his mind before the concert began, and it went without a hitch. He thinks far too much is said about a conductor's difficulties. He protests also against "virtuoso-conducting." "Why should the orchestra rise? Why should so much be said about the way in which things are done? It is the *composer* who should have the applause, not the *conductor*." When a concert is over, he would have all the lights put out, the portrait of the composer thrown by a lantern on a screen, and make the audience applaud that. Leschetizky's own career as a conductor ended when Rubinstein came back to take up his position as "Janitor of Music" at the Court. Since then he has not sought the opportunity of carrying these ideas into practice.

In 1864 he visited England for the first time,

making his *début* at one of Ella's Musical Union Concerts, where he played the Schumann Quintet and some of his own compositions. Mr. Kuhe happened to be in the artists' room at the time, and says that at rehearsal there arose a considerable discussion as to the *tempo* at which the Quintet should be taken. Leschetizky, it seems, was accustomed to play it much more brilliantly and at a greater speed than Joachim—the first violin on this occasion—and nothing would induce him to play it in any other way. "I play it so, or not at all." "Very well," replied Joachim, "but mind the responsibility rests with *you*." They played it according to Leschetizky's rendering, and so great was its success that the new *tempo* became universally popular.

Whatever Leschetizky made up his mind to do he carried through in spite of all obstacles. Once, on arriving at a town where he was to play in the evening, he found the impresario anxious to give up the concert, because that very day another pianist had already played the Concerto chosen by Leschetizky. "No matter," said Leschetizky quite calmly, "I will play it all the same. The audience will

LESCHETIZKY IN 1903

come to hear how I do it after the other man." And they did. In England it was still the fashion to give extremely long concerts—although not quite as long as in the Mendelssohn era, when it is recorded that Benedict arranged a concert of thirty-eight numbers. Mr. Kuhe was one of the most generous of impresarios in this respect, and Leschetizky never lost an opportunity of rallying him on the subject.

While Leschetizky was staying in London Mr. Kuhe gave one of these lengthy concerts at Brighton, and the former went down to hear it. But when he arrived he was tired after the journey and in the mood for a quiet evening; the armchair was comfortable; it began to rain—he did not go. Next morning he was walking about the parade enjoying the sunshine and the sea air, quite happy and entirely oblivious of the concert for the moment, when up came Mr. Kuhe, weary and reproachful: "Why did you not come to my concert last night?" Leschetizky stared at him, apparently horror-struck, "The concert! Good heavens," he exclaimed, "you don't mean to say it is over already!"

Leschetizky came to London two or three times afterwards, but never stayed very long. The atmosphere of solidity, musical and climatic, depressed him, and he was always glad to get away again to lands where the sky was blue and the sun shone.

Among those who had worked with him in St. Petersburg was Annette Essipoff. She came to him when she was twelve years old, and he grew to be prouder of her than almost any other pupil. "I would have given my life, could it have brought her nearer the goal," he says. "She had a talent that is met with once in a lifetime—oh, if you could but have heard how she played to me sometimes." Later his pride grew into love, and she became his second wife.

In 1878, partly on account of her health and his own—weakened by an attack of typhoid fever—and partly for the sake of his father, who had been living alone for many years, Leschetizky made up his mind to leave Russia and settle permanently in Vienna. During the twenty-six years that had elapsed since it had been his home, great changes had taken place there.

Vienna had always had a reputation as a musical city. Yet in 1838 Schumann, though finding it delightfully gay and the opera "splendid, surpassing any other," added in his letters home, ". . . in vain do I look for musicians, that is musicians who can play passably well on one or two instruments, and who are cultivated men." With the people themselves he is pleased enough: "Of all Germans," he writes, "they spare their hands the least, and even in their idolatry have been known to split their gloves with clapping so much." Incidentally it is curious to compare with this Mendelssohn's description of a Berlin audience a few years earlier: "When a piece of music comes to an end, the whole company sit in solemn silence, each considering what his opinion is to be, nobody giving a sign of applause or pleasure, and all the while the performer in the most painful embarrassment not knowing whether, nor in what spirit, he has been listened to." Enthusiastic as Vienna evidently was by nature, her enthusiasm did not carry her to the same level as other German cities, where music was an every-day occurrence, for she was as much behind

Leipzig, for instance, as she was in advance of Russia.

At the time of Leschetizky's birth—1830—Vienna had just lost two of her greatest composers, Beethoven and Schubert, and for the moment no one remained to carry on her tradition as the home of great musicians. Schumann and Mendelssohn, it is true, came to and fro. Spohr had been there—Paganini, Vieuxtemps, Hummel, Meyerbeer, Cherubini, and a host of other executant-composers, including Liszt and Chopin. But no great composer was actually living there—nor was to live there for many years to come. Her creative spirit seemed to have gone to sleep and left her rich only in virtuosi. In 1878, when Leschetizky returned from Russia, it was to find her once more restored to her former glory. Brahms had come. Goldmark, Brückner, Brüll, Volkmann, Johann Strauss were there. For thirty years she had been but a city of players. She was again a city of composers.

Leschetizky bought a house and settled down, thinking to rest from teaching for a time. But no sooner was it known that he had established himself in Vienna, than the

inevitable pupils assailed him with petitions for lessons, and almost immediately he was hard at work again.

He had by now published a considerable number of compositions, many of which had become popular; but, never able to devote his whole energies to composing, most of his works are valuable solely as admirable pianoforte studies, wherein he has expressed his perfect knowledge of the instrument. Everything he writes is full of charm and handled with a delicacy that is peculiarly his own. Though difficult to play well, his works are all effective and repay the trouble of study.

In 1882 his second opera, "Die Erste Falte," was brought out at Mannheim. The composer was not present on the first night, for it happened that Liszt arrived just as he was starting, and Leschetizky, in the joy of seeing his old friend again—they had not met for many years—talked on till long after the only train had gone. This opera was produced with success in several other German towns, and finally in Vienna, under Richter. Vienna was full of interesting musicians at this time, all of whom Leschetizky knew: Pauline Lucca, Mariana

Brandt, Schütt, Richter, Navratil, Rosenthal, Fischof, Grünfeld, Brahms, and many more. The Ton-Künstler Verein—a new musical club—became the centre where they all met, and where they produced and discussed each other's compositions with the freedom of old friends.

Leschetizky saw Brahms more often at Ischyl than in Vienna, and spent many an evening with him for, though they could not abide each other's music, they were excellent friends.

Leschetizky relates how, when he was sitting at the piano composing one morning, Brahms walked in and looked over his shoulder to see what he was doing. "Ha! What sort of things are you writing this morning? I see—quite *little* things, *little* things, of course, yes." "*Little* things? Yes, they are, but ten times more amusing than yours, I can tell you."

Every great artist who stayed in Vienna came to see Leschetizky, and he and Mme. Essipoff were welcomed everywhere as the central figures of a brilliant, gifted circle in which it was a privilege to be included. In 1892 they separated. Two years later he married his secretary, Mme. Donnimirska.

Leschetizky had long since definitely given up appearing in public. He lost his delight in applause and all the excitements connected with platform life very early. Soon, his interests, more and more absorbed by his pupils, the ambition to play gradually died out, and he gave his whole time to helping those who cared for a public career more than he did himself. His last appearance in public was in Frankfort in 1887, where he played the E flat Concerto of Beethoven. He says: "I did not care for their enthusiasm at all. Nor did I read their criticisms, though I was told they were good. If they had been bad I would have read them, for bad criticism is very wholesome. We learn much from the disagreeable things critics say, for they make us think, whereas the good things only make us glad."

Once only during his visit to London in September 1897 he allowed himself to be persuaded into playing in public by one of his pupils. This was at Mr. Daniel Mayer's reception at the Salle Erard, where Leschetizky gave some of his own compositions: "L'Aveu," "La Source," "Barcarolle," and the "Mazurka"

in E flat. The storm of applause when he finished made speech impossible; but, ever critical of himself, he inquired anxiously in a whisper of those intimate friends around him: "Oh, children, have I played badly—oh, tell me, have I played badly?"

He stayed a few weeks only, but this time he was so sorry to leave London that he has been making plans to come back ever since.

He spends part of every summer at Ischyl, where many years ago he bought a beautiful villa, and where for months he lives content amongst trees and mountains and the company of an occasional sympathetic friend.

Sometimes he goes to Carlsbad for a few weeks, sometimes to Wiesbaden, but the winter always finds him at home in Vienna, for his working year begins in November and—except for a day or two at Christmas—continues without a break until the following June.

DR. ARNE (SKETCH BY BARTOLOZZI)
Old style of playing, for new style see Frontispiece

CHAPTER III

THE EVOLUTION OF THE METHOD

OVER a hundred and fifty years ago, in the year 1747, John Sebastian Bach went to Potsdam to visit Frederick the Great, and while there he was asked to try over some of the new forte-pianos that had recently been made for the King by Silbermann. He did so, and disliked the noise extremely. His ears, too long accustomed to the gentle tinkle of his beloved clavichord, could not accept this harsh, modern instrument, and he returned home thankful that Providence had not brought him up on such an abominable invention.

But his son, Carl Philip Emanuel, in the service of the King, and having therefore the opportunity to study the Fortepiano at his leisure, became so much interested in it that he

wrote a book on the art of playing it—the first book that exists on piano technique. His father's instructions for the clavichord advised players to keep the hand as quiet as possible, "to wipe a note off the keys with the end-joint of the finger only, as if taking up a coin from a table"—"not to be too lavish in the employment of the thumb." Carl Philip Emanuel transferred what he could of this to his own book, putting in a plea for certain necessary innovations—he thought they might look on the thumb with a little more favour: on rare occasions a note might be struck, it was inadvisable now to pass the fingers over each other backwards if they could do without. They must, above all things, maintain an elegant tranquillity, a quiet deportment, being careful to sit precisely before the middle of the keyboard, using their fingers softly, caressing

> Those dancing chips
> O'er whom thy fingers walk with gentle gait.

In Bach's time, and long afterwards, people never played vigorously. They could not. If they had attempted to do so the piano would have collapsed at once. They were very deli-

cate instruments, unfitted for any but the most tender treatment—which, indeed, is all they ever had.

Playing must have been anxious work in those days. There was no pedal to swell the sound, or cover up defective technique. The note died away immediately after it was struck, making—what distressed Mozart so much—"cantabile playing" an impossibility. The touch of the keyboard was something like that of a harpsichord, the keys jumping up and down with a little jerk; and when the instrument went out of tune it was a serious matter.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century all this had changed. The mechanism was so much improved that it had developed into a responsive medium worth the trouble of studying. Clementi was the first who composed specially for the piano; for Mozart and Haydn, concerning themselves little with its mechanical resources (what they wrote serving equally well for the clavichord or harpsichord), treated it merely as a vehicle for the expression of their ideas, well suited to the inspiration of the moment. Clementi—whose inspirations were few and far between—regarded it from an

entirely different standpoint. He was interested in the instrument itself; he experimented with it, tried what effects could be got out of it, and composed to introduce these effects rather than for any other reason. He considered the pianist more than the musician, and, in so doing, became the founder of a school of playing that regarded mechanical skill as a study in itself.

By degrees the piano and its players, developing side by side, diverged into two distinct styles—the English and the Viennese. The English school grew up, so to speak, of the masculine sex, the Viennese of the feminine—their respective instruments being in a large measure responsible for the heavy, vigorous qualities of the one, and the delicacy and lightness of the other. As long as Mozart lived, the Viennese held to their old-time gentleness and quaint dignity, but after his death they became more and more brilliant; so that, in his "Music in Germany," Dr. Burney could write of them as the "most remarkable people for fire and invention" (by which he probably meant improvisation) that he had ever heard. In spite of this reputation, the manner of performance

in those days, tried by present standards, would have seemed very dry indeed. Correct, accurate, redolent of propriety and good manners, the goal of perfection exemplified by such men as Herz, Hunten, and Steibelt, cannot have been very interesting. Clementi himself, though no doubt angular and stiff, did try to some extent to shake off prim custom. At any rate, his was a wider mind, genuinely interested in striving to infuse some warmth and colour into his art. He pioneered his cause to the utmost, talking about it, writing studies for it, and setting every one else doing the same. His ideas were worked out still further by his pupils Field and Cramer, who, having a faint inkling of the mysteries of "tone-effects," tried to "make the piano sing"—as Field's compositions show.

As yet no one had in the least realised what the instrument could be made to do. Quantity of notes, not quality, was the chief concern; fluency, not beauty of tone, the aim of a good player. The perpendicular finger of the Bach era—a relic of the clavichord touch—was still fashionable; indeed, up to this time, there was no reason why it should not be so, for the

music of the day called for nothing more forcible. But there were signs that this dull code of dry formulæ was soon to become too narrow, and the complaisant pedagogue to be driven from his throne. There was need of a change, and the man destined to effect it was at hand.

Wiping out their stiffness, poking fun at their propriety, it was Beethoven who broke through their foolish little rules and gave them something deeper and more vital to think of. Full of dramatic power, of orchestral effects, of changing moods, his music outstretched their limits entirely. It created a new element and offered them a new problem: the study of tone. He demanded of the piano what had never been demanded of it before; both the instrument and its players were forced to change. Henceforward the art of pianism stood on an entirely different level. A new school was growing up.

Weber, who was an immense admirer of Beethoven, and a great influence in the musical world, went into the question with enthusiasm —indeed, some of his own Sonatas showed a faint dramatic tendency, new figures, and a more complicated technique.

Kalkbrenner, a follower of Clementi and famous teacher, was at work in Paris. Dussek, and Berger (Mendelssohn's master) helped elsewhere. Schubert in his compositions afforded food for experiment too.

On the other side Czerny, Woelffl, Herz, Steibelt, and even Hummel—who was considered a good enough pianist to be put forward as Beethoven's rival—upheld the prim style of their youth. Thus began the usual struggle between old and new, ending in the invariable victory for the new. Moscheles and Mendelssohn, though educated in the old traditions, sympathised with modern views, so welding a link between the past and "the wonderful things reported of a Pole—Chopin by name," of whom Schumann told the world in his journal.

In about eighty years both players and instruments had developed beyond recognition, virtuosity became an art in itself, and the piano so increased in importance that instead of being regarded as little worse than an accompaniment, it had become popular as a solo instrument, and long recitals, without the relief of song or strings, were given for it alone.

Partly to avoid the monotony of this one-man entertainment, and partly to induce the public to stop to the end, great pianists, such as Thalberg, Liszt, and Dreyschock began to do strange and wonderful gymnastic tricks. They passed one hand over the other with extraordinary rapidity; divided the melody between two hands and made it sound as if they had not; played octaves glissando; jumped with marvellous agility from one end of the piano to the other; wrote horrible and difficult fantasias of interminable length; played without the music; in short, they did everything they could think of to make a sensation and astonish the public. Vienna and Paris, where the audiences came from gay and sprightly circles and much preferred being amused to being instructed, were delighted. Sober-minded Germany was less so, for—although Liszt created a *furore* there as well as elsewhere—she had Mendelssohn to keep her in the way she should go. Europe was divided into two distinct camps—the one brilliant, the other scholarly. To the former belonged Leschetizky.

In 1830, the year of his birth, Rubinstein was but a baby; Von Bulow a few months old;

ON THE KAHLENBERG

Clara Schumann had just given her first concert at the age of ten—(her programme is interesting as showing the kind of music popular at the time: "Rondo Brilliant," by Kalkbrenner, "Variations Brilliantes," by Herz, "Variations" on a thema of her own); Saint-Saëns was born five—Taüsig eleven—years later. Dreyschock was already twelve; Henselt sixteen; Thalberg eighteen; Liszt nineteen.

All these artists and many more visited Vienna, and Leschetizky heard them often. They were the source from which he drew inspiration as a young teacher, and whose playing served him as material from which, later on, to build up a system of his own. It is from them, from Schulhoff his friend, and from Czerny his master, that he has worked out the principles known as "The Leschetizky Method."

The explanation of the technical part of this method without practical illustration—that is, without a piano at hand—is impossible; for the description would have to cover not only the account of the manual exercises themselves, but of their application to the instrument. The art of playing the piano cannot be taught

by correspondence; although the development of the hand may be. The instrument must be there to give value to the statement. To describe a pianoforte method by the pen does as much good to the pianist as the "Absent Treatment" of a Christian Scientist does to his patient. Indeed, the treatment might, by a rare chance, cure a patient furnished with a fertile imagination; whereas no amount of imagination will make anybody play the piano, even if he read all the treatises written, from the naïve simplicity of Philip Emanuel Bach's "True Art of Piano Playing," to the wonderful complexity of Tobias Mathay, on "The Act of Touch."

With regard to methods in general, Leschetizky is very broad-minded. If a method can teach the pupil to accomplish what is necessary, the process by which it has been done is quite immaterial. Any suggestion that makes for progress would be welcome to him, and though he seems to have drawn all that is serviceable and important into his own system, he says: "I have thought over these things all my life, but if you can find better ways than mine I will adopt them—yes, and I will take

two lessons of you and give you a thousand gulden a lesson."

Nearly every one can do something well if they are told exactly what to do. Leschetizky does not expect to make a silver goblet out of a pewter-pot, but he takes the trouble to make the pewter-pot as perfect in its way as possible. He does not think the world is made for genius. He sees that it is made for the ordinary man. Not in the least imbued with "that appreciation of mediocrity that the Creator of all things must evidently possess," —as Ehlert puts it—he knows that those who can "reach the heaven" and "come back and tell the world" are very few, and it is the cry of the weaker talent that has to be answered, and for whom (unfortunately) methods must be worked out. Genius has called forth no system. It will express itself well, no matter what means it may elect to use.

Broadly speaking, Leschetizky's plan is to cultivate the pupil's special gifts, whatever they may be; to leave those things that lie beyond his capacity almost entirely alone. He prefers the narrower and more perfect field, to unfinished work on a large scale. To spend time

wrestling with details in which glory can never be attained is a waste of energy. The struggle merely serves to emphasise incapacity in one direction to the detriment of natural talents in others, and generally ends in making the player so nervous that the very thought of being asked to play overwhelms him with terror.

People are very ingenious in finding excuses when they do not want to play, or when they have played badly. "A bad instrument" is one of them. "Artists say too much about the materials they have to use," says Leschetizky. "It is hard to find the tools unresponsive or uncertain, but do not accustom yourselves to a first-rate piano. If you do, it will lead you to think you are responsible for the beautiful sounds that come out of it; whereas very likely it is but its natural tone—independent of your skill. At home you think: 'What a lovely touch I have.' Then you come to me. You play abominably, and say it is the fault of my piano. It is not my piano at all. It is you. Your hand is not under control, you have not learnt the principles of things. If you really know how to produce a certain effect—and produce it as the result of your knowledge—

not of your piano—you can face almost any instrument with a clear conscience. If you leave anything to chance, you will be the first to feel it—your audience will be the second. A good pianist should be able to make any passable instrument sound well, for his knowledge will be so accurate that he can calculate to a very fine point how much he must allow for the difference and quality of touch."

In Leschetizky's young days even more depended on the player's scientific knowledge of how things should be done than now, for people were asked to play upon very strange instruments. The mere remembrance of them makes him indignant. "When one was invited somewhere to dinner," he expostulated one evening when reminiscences brought up the subject, "the plates given you to eat upon were not cracked, the wine-glasses to drink out of were not dirty, the hostess was not in rags, but decked out in her finest, and she gave you the best she had to give. That was *at* dinner. But *after* dinner! *Mein Gott,* she wanted music. She had a piano, but—one or two notes stuck a little—could you manage? The pedal squeaked —well, you need not use it much, need you?

The things on the top of the piano jingled rather—but then they were such a bother to move. The tuner came yesterday, but he said it is not as good as it used to be—which is *so* strange, for it has scarcely been played upon these twenty years—but do play us something! They say times have changed in this respect,—perhaps so—but my pupils don't seem to go with the times, for they tell me they meet with these things still."

CHAPTER IV

THE METHOD

"THE Leschetizky Method" conveys to most people the idea of a technical system by which pianists can be taught to play the piano well. Probably this is so because technical perfection is one of the most obvious characteristics of his school, and a quality immediately comprehensible to the average audience. Virtuosity is, after all, but a high development of the natural use of the hands, to which, in a less skilled form, every one is habituated from childhood up; common ground, whereon all sorts of people, from the prizefighter to the juggler, from the juggler to the virtuoso, can meet, it is suitable food for even the least intelligent; and unusual feats of execution will be marked out long before those points which are of higher importance to the interpretation of art strike home.

For this reason certain technical characteristics noticeable in Leschetizky's pupils—emphasised rhythm, clearness, inaudible pedalling, brilliance in staccato passages—having become associated with his teaching, are popularly regarded as the chief things taught in his school, and the attainment of them the chief object which his pupils have in view.

The majority of students, coming to him in the single expectation of finding untold treasures of pianistic wisdom, are surprised to find that these treasures play but a small part in his scheme of work, and that the larger proportion of their time must be devoted, not to the development of manual skill, but to the art of studying the music written for the piano. This question of study is the principal point of difference between Leschetizky's and other methods. His is not a technical system, including advice on musical matters, but a system which makes its primary aim the study of the music written for the piano; its second, that of the effects to be obtained from the instrument; its third, that of the development of the hand.

Though the development of the hand comes

last in the three sections, Leschetizky in no way depreciates the value of technical ability—it is impossible to use the higher faculties without it—but he looks upon the period of apprenticeship to its attainment merely as work done to perfect a necessary medium for adequate interpretation.

The technical qualities indicative of his teaching have come in process of time to be labelled "The Leschetizky Method." Leschetizky himelf objects to the term, for he has no established technical method. The name originated from his assistants, who, having collected the most valuable and frequently needed technical exercises, have pieced them together and arranged them logically into a connected series, through which they put the pupils to be prepared for him.

"I have no technical method," says Leschetizky; "there are certain ways of producing certain effects, and I have found those which succeed best; but I have no iron rules. How is it possible one should have them? One pupil needs this, another that; the hand of each differs; the brain of each differs. There can be no rule. I am a doctor to whom my

pupils come as patients to be cured of their musical ailments, and the remedy must vary in each case. There is but one part of my teaching that may be called a "Method," if you like; and that is the way in which I teach my pupils to learn a piece of music. This is invariably the same for all, whether artist or little child; it is the way Mme. Essipoff studies, the way *we* study—and *we* have much talent."

With reference to technique, the gist of what Leschetizky considers physically necessary is this: the hand, wrist, and arm must be under such complete control that whatever part be called upon to play, it shall be able to do so independently of its neighbour. It should be possible to contract one part, while leaving the other relaxed; to hold one part taut while the other is slack; to put one part in motion while the other is at rest. He lays special stress on a few points: the development of strength and sensitiveness in the finger-tips; clear distinction between the many varieties of touch; the necessity of an immaculate pedalling.

There are exercises to obtain these various results, and those of which the pupil stands

most in need have to be gone through before the musical part of his work can be thought of.

As soon as the technical threads are drawn into order they are worked into a piece, and the pupil enters on the second stage of his study—that which concerns the manipulation of the instrument. He will probably begin with some simple composition such as one of Mendelssohn's "Songs Without Words," where he can be taught how a melody should be played and accompanied. This may be followed by something to illustrate the different kinds of staccato and legato playing; the many varieties of rhythm, special pedal effects, &c.: an example to which every technical detail that has been learnt can be applied.

In the very first composition the pupil studies, he learns how to work in the new way, which is as follows: he takes the first bar, or phrase (according to the amount he can grasp and retain), and dissects it till every marking is clear to him. He decides how he will play it—with what fingering, touch, pedalling, accent, &c. He practises each detail as he comes to it. He puts all the parts together, learning it by heart as he goes, finishing one section, making it as

perfect as he can in every respect, both technically and musically, before he attempts the next. What is required of him is, that he shall study every piece of music so thoroughly that he knows every detail in it, can play any part of it accurately, beginning at any point, and that he can visualise the whole without the music—that is, see in his mind what is written, without either notes or instrument.

Every pupil must study in this way—bar by bar, slowly and deliberately engraving each point on his mind as on a map. "One page a day so learnt will give you a trunk-full of music or your répertoire at the end of the year," says Leschetizky, "and, moreover, it will remain securely in your memory."

Any one with the power of concentration can learn to play by heart—no matter how intricate a composition may be—if he will take the trouble to study it according to this plan. If, after a work has been studied, not only the melody, but the entire composition in detail—*i.e.*, every note, rest, marking of any kind—cannot be seen and heard by the mind's eye and ear, it has never been thoroughly and accurately learnt. A lack of exactitude in this

respect is the reason why so many people who can play quite well when they are alone are absolutely stranded before an audience. The presence of other people compels them to concentrate their attention on what they are doing, and they find they do not actually know what that is. When alone it will probably be of little consequence whether they know the music (in Leschetizky's interpretation of the word) or not; their fingers having acquired the habit of the notes, and their ears of the sound, generally suffice to carry them comfortably through. So long as the fingers can go their well-worn way, unconscious of what they do, without the hindrance of thought, they will be fairly safe; but if for any reason they become self-conscious, losing their instinct, they fail instantly.

A blind man on first recovering his sight can no longer locate himself. He does not know the meaning of his surroundings. The unaccustomed light has obliterated for the moment his only safeguard—the sense of touch—and so altered the condition of familiar things that they have become strange to him. The player who has absorbed the sound and

feeling of the notes into his ears and fingers, and not into his thinking brain, is in the same case ; for if the mental faculty is unexpectedly called into action it paralyses for the moment the instinctive motor faculties on which he usually relies. The learner must therefore thread his way so carefully through the network of complications which a musical composition presents, that he emerges familiar with every detail ; then, if the manual memory fail him, the visual or audital one will take its place. Any lapse on the part of nature after all these precautions can only be regarded as the Act of God, against which no insurance can be taken.

The pupil having now gone through the necessary training to develop his hands and to apply them to the best result upon his instrument, and having learnt also how to study the music written for it, has arrived at the really interesting part of his work—the musical part.

Leschetizky seldom gives the greatest compositions to those whom he feels to be still immature. He sees the unfitness of expecting young, untried natures to deal with what is an expression of the deepest influences of life. They cannot understand. They can only

imitate, and he shrinks from the task of trying to convey to them what they cannot possibly realise in its fullest and most intimate meaning. He gives what lies within, or at most just beyond their grasp, so that they may have the satisfaction of discovering what they *can* do, as well as what they *cannot* do. His pupils study several compositions at the same time, sometimes variations on some particular difficulty, sometimes differing entirely from each other. Development is more equable and the mind keeps fresher for its work, if energy can be turned into several channels instead of being concentrated along one. The more varied the material, the less chance of the faculties becoming wearied by the monotony of continued effort in one direction, and the better for endurance as a whole.

For this concentrated way of study, this mosaic work, is extremely exhausting at first. It needs much patience to analyse everything so minutely that the mental picture lacks no detail; but it is worth the trouble. Not only is the result good and immediate, but it remains firmly fixed in the memory.

Leschetizky, even in the maturity of his

career, never practised more than three hours a day. He considers that four, or at most five hours, should be enough for any one. If it is not, the requisite qualities to make a pianist must be lacking. Hours and hours of practice do compel certain results in a shorter time than they could normally be produced, and, were the supply of energy unlimited, no one would hesitate to devote his entire day to practising, in order to shorten the road to the goal. But this supply being exhaustible, if the student draws it out at a greater speed, or in a greater quantity than can naturally be refunded, it will fail prematurely and leave his nervous organisation without vitality. Technical power means the ability of the hand to carry out the suggestions of the brain, and this will be great or small according to the speed at which the hand can understand and translate these suggestions into action.

Overwork tends rather to retard than to accelerate the telegraphic message, deadening the susceptibility of the wire, and exhausting the nervous force to be transmitted.

The newspapers tell of a wonderful man who has acquired such control over the different

parts of his body that he can contract any muscle at will and move his internal organs about as he feels inclined. Leschetizky does not require these results in his pupils, but he does require the concentration that produces them.

Concentrated thought is the basis of his principles, the corner-stone of his method. Without it nothing of any permanent value can be obtained, either in art or anything else. No amount of mechanical finger-work can take its place; and the player who repeats the same passage, wearily expectant that he will accomplish it in process of time, is a lost soul on a hopeless quest. Leschetizky enumerates the essential qualities of good work as follows: First, an absolutely clear comprehension of the principal points to be studied in the music on hand; a clear perception of where the difficulties lie, and of the way in which to conquer them; the mental realisation of these three facts *before* they are carried out by the hands.

"Decide exactly *what* it is you want to do in the first place," he impresses on every one; "then *how* you will do it; then play it. Stop and think if you played it in the way you

meant to do; then only, if sure of this, go ahead. Without concentration, remember, you can do nothing. The brain must guide the fingers, not the fingers the brain."

This is a rough indication of the method of study through which Leschetizky's pupils have gained so much.

His *logia* are simple and few, for he cares more for what is *done* than for what is *said*. To his mind the making of many maxims is an impossibility in the study of art. There is but one note penetrating throughout all his advice, and one point on which he is inexorable: the necessity of concentrated thought.

CHAPTER V

THE LESSONS

ONE day a stranger came to ask Leschetizky for a few finishing lessons. "Will a mud pie give you a fair idea of a mountain?" was the Professor's reply. "No," said the stranger, "but then I don't want the mountain." "Well, you must go somewhere else for your mud pie; we don't keep them here."

The stranger went away to supply his needs elsewhere. Any one in Vienna could have told him that Leschetizky inexorably refuses to dole out a slice of his system of study. It is not to be had in a popular and abridged edition. It is a course of work for serious students, and can only be commanded in its entirety.

Leschetizky will only acknowledge as his "qualified pupils" those who have had regular lessons with him for at least two years, and

preferably longer. He considers it impossible for any pupil, however gifted, to grasp more than the grammar of his teaching in a few months—as some pianists have tried to do. "For," he says, "your house still remains to be built when the foundations are laid."

Giving but three lessons a day, he himself is able to undertake very few of the hundred and fifty pupils studying his method, and these few must necessarily be chosen from among the best. The others have to content themselves with the crumbs that fall from his assistants, till they are considered ready to join the elect. This preparation may last a few weeks, a few months, a year or even longer, the time varying with the pupils' progress.

Every now and then they play to the Professor, who, according to the stage at which they have arrived, agrees to give them lessons fortnightly, monthly—or perhaps not at all for the present.

In former days, when he had more strength, he took the most talented of his pupils through the technical training himself; but the present plan is better, for he is not naturally of a patient disposition. Emerson says a man

should be judged by his intentions. If that is so, Leschetizky stands high in the scale, for he is full of good intentions. They are with him always; but, as a dilapidated American was heard to murmur at the end of a bad lesson: "They must have paved a considerable stretch of the side-walks in hell by now," for they invariably leave him at the moment when they are most wanted.

The Professor intends to make allowances for all difficulties. He knows how tenaciously bad habits will stick, how hard they are to dislodge, and how long the fingers retain their old established ways, in spite of the best will in the world to train them to the new. He quite realises what a tax this minute and detailed method of analysis is to the unpractised mind, and how irksome are the first steps on the road to it. He is full of benevolent sympathy. But when the time for the lesson comes, everything but the immediate need of getting the thing done in the right way is obliterated from his mind, and in the enthusiasm of the moment all traces of this benevolence speedily disappear. He forgets the pupil is full of original sin and cannot wait for the signs of grace.

This leads to misunderstanding. It leads also to the sudden exit of the pupil; to the slamming of doors; to the crushing of music on the floor; to grim remarks about a future better spent "in tomato-planting." Once it led to total darkness. In the intensity of his feelings the master arose, hastily put out the gas, rushed away, and left his pupils sitting round the class in silence and gloom until things were patched up by some comforting soul outside.

Leschetizky loves his pupils as if they were his own children; but, as a good father, he considers his duty better done through the aid of discipline than of sympathy, believing the scourge to be of greater profit to their musical souls than the prop. Especially if he sees they are suffering from parental pampering. He is much troubled by parents. They come to him imbued with the notion that their particular offspring is quite unusually and supremely gifted, and the offspring himself is still more imbued with that notion. It is expedient, therefore, to remove these parents to a distance, in order that the mist of adoration may disperse, and leave the field clear for the child to find his true level. Otherwise

valuable time may be wasted in making headway against the inability of the parent to view discipline in any light but that of cruelty, and of the pupil to consider himself other than a sacrifice on the altar of his master's whims.

Leschetizky makes unsparing use of his power to analyse character in his teaching, unhesitatingly saying anything, however hard to bear, that he thinks may be a spur to the pupil's development. He has the gift of insight to a very remarkable degree, and although his own nature is not pliable enough to unbend to every other, he makes few mistakes in his summing up as a whole. Like all highly-strung people he is extremely sensitive to personality. This sensibility affects him in various ways. In the morning when the door-bell announces the arrival of the first pupil, should the Professor chance to be in a fastidious frame of mind, he steals downstairs to find out who it is, and if on peeping surreptitiously into the room he sees some one antipathetic to him, he promptly steals upstairs again and stays there a quarter of an hour or more to recover the blow. If the pupil has caught a glimpse of his face, he would generally prefer to go home, but knowing that

if he does, he may never have another lesso elects to face the worst and wait till the Professor feels inclined to come down again. When he comes down—if he has resigned himself to the inevitable, and if the pupil be of a tactful disposition—all may yet go well; the sinner be received into favour again, and sent home proud in the knowledge that he has gained the day and left a legacy of happy relations behind him after all.

The early lessons with Leschetizky are at once a revelation and an ordeal. If the quality of the pupil's intellect be at all strained—and his horizon too circumscribed for him to have found it out before—it will now be made quite clear to him.

In the first place he is expected to make all his corrections on the spot, for to Leschetizky's rapid brain comprehension is synonymous with performance—to understand is to be able to do. He is expected to hold these corrections firmly in his head, and to have the wit to apply them to new cases immediately. Nerve, quick observation, retentive memory, presence of mind must all be his. He must be neither too quick nor too slow, being careful not to step

Daisy Suart. Clara Clemens Katharine Goodson Cleveland - Ohio Ethel Newcomb

Mark Twain's Daughter - married Gabrilowitsch

A GROUP OF LESCHETIZKY'S PUPILS

Whitney Pt. N.Y. Lo Paramour.

in before the master has finished what he has to say and the illustration is complete, lest there be a sudden pause, and Leschetizky, regarding him with a baleful eye, sit back with folded hands, and inquire which of the two is to play: "Are you giving the lesson, or am I?" He must follow the different kinds of touch, the pedalling, the fingering, the variety of effects that may be drawn out of the instrument—all so difficult and puzzling in the initial stages—and be able to reproduce them on the spot. The most vivid and concentrated interest is exacted from him in every detail, infinite patience and unwearied effort.

Leschetizky cannot endure half-heartedness. Caring so intensely for music and for all that concerns it, an apathetic attitude is as unbearable to him, as disloyalty to his country would be to a patriot, and he resents it with his whole nature. Nor does he hesitate to show it. Enthusiasm he must and will have. A temperament devoid of it is an enigma he cannot solve. He expects a ready appreciation. He likes people to talk, to ask him questions, to be cheerful. He cannot bear dismal solemnity. If the pupil be of a taciturn order, Leschetizky

is quite sure something must be seriously wrong with his mind; or that he has not understood what he has been told, and is afraid to say so; or, what is most probable, that he possesses a very disagreeable character.

With one of these unfortunate dispositions—feminine, strange to say—it is on record that Leschetizky once went through an hour without a single word. She would not speak, he said, so why should he? On coming into the room he softly closed the door, tip-toed to the piano, bowed to the pupil, sat down and gave her the whole lesson in solemn and mysterious silence, indicating all he wanted by signs and dumb show. When the hour was over he rose, bowed with impressive gravity as before, glided to the door, and disappeared as silently as he had come in.

He enjoys experimenting with his pupils, and inventing special fingerings, or special exercises for unusual cases.

He had a pupil who played so accurately by ear that she could not be persuaded to study in any other way. It served her faithfully for a long time, until one day, when playing in the class, her memory failed, and she could not

collect herself. Nemesis came at the next lesson, for Leschetizky shut down the cover of her keyboard, and left her, bereft of all sound, to learn a page of unfamiliar music by means of her eyes alone. Another, who was unnerved by the merest trifle, he cured by accustoming her to shocks. One day, suddenly jumping up from the piano, he stared intently into the garden, exclaiming, "Ha! what is that I see out there?" Of course the pupil hurried to the window, but, seeing nothing exciting, turned back, startled and perplexed. "It's all right," nodded the master suddenly; "go on *exactly* where you left off." This kind of treatment continued till she could stand any disturbance with composure.

To another, whose ear was not fine enough to distinguish exactly what notes made up a chord when he heard it, Leschetizky taught an entire composition by playing it to him bar by bar, bit by bit, until he realised it all, both piecemeal and in combination. The harder the patient's case, the keener the doctor's interest. Nothing gives him greater satisfaction than to find the remedy for some unusual defect. He is as proud and pleased as a

gleeful child with a new toy, and as delightful to watch.

Buried deep in contemplation of the difficulty, he sits perfectly silent, motionless save for a periodic puff at his cigar. Presently a smile steals cautiously over his face—the clue is signalled. For an instant, still tentative and expectant, his hand poised in mid-air, he awaits discovery, then all at once up goes the head, out comes the pencil, and with an exultant shout he announces: "Now I've got it!" As simply and clearly as it can be put, he then explains the point in question and why this is its best solution.

One explanation ought to suffice for all time, and the pupil is expected to adopt it at once. If he cannot do this and the same mistake is made twice, the Professor begins to feel offended; if a third time, he shuts up the music in disgust; a fourth (having opened it again), he hurls it far away; a fifth (if the pupil is still there) one of the two invariably leaves the room. Sometimes, a little remorseful, the Professor comes back and stands half hesitating at the door of the dining-room, looking sweet and sorry, wishing things could have been

otherwise, but quite unable for the moment to say a single word of comfort to the sufferer. His own powers of memory, and of doing instantly with his hands what his brain suggests, are so remarkable that he cannot realise in the least what it means to be less highly gifted.

He appreciates courage, and respects the buoyant nature that can right itself after every rebuff, and bravely holds on, whatever happens, seeing in this a token of the best kind of self-confidence. With Stevenson he agrees that most of a man's opinions about himself are true, and he who finds himself most comfortable on the footstool is probably in his right place.

By reason of the Professor's own strong individuality, the adaptable pupil has, as a rule, calmer lessons than the more original nature that cannot amalgamate itself easily with another person's views. Leschetizky's powers of discernment seldom fail him in prophesying who will make a stir in the world, and it is precisely by these few that his keenest interest is excited, and with whom the storm bursts out most easily.

He does not always use his singularly pene-

trating qualities to sad issues. When the initial steps have been overcome, and the difficulties thinned out a little, the lesson is a delight from beginning to end.

Full of apt similes, weaving them in at every turn, Leschetizky has a knack of hitting upon exactly the appropriate figure to make a suggestion intelligible and permanent in the mind.

"To make an effective *accelerando* you must glide into rapidity as steadily as a train increases its speed when steaming out of a station."

"Teach yourself to make a *rallentando* evenly by watching the drops of water cease as you turn off a tap."

"A player with an unbalanced rhythm reminds me of an intoxicated man who cannot walk straight."

"Your fingers are like capering horses, spirited and willing, but ignorant of where to go without a guide. Put on your bridle and curb them in till they learn to obey you, or they will not serve you well."

On the whole he theorises very little. Everything he says is practical, to the point, and can be immediately used to some good end.

"If you are going to play a scale, place your hand in readiness on the keyboard in the same position as you would if you were going to write a letter—or to take a pinch of snuff."

"The bystander ought to know by the attitude of your hand what chord you are going to play *before* you play it, for each chord has its own physiognomy."

"If you play wrong notes, either you do not know *where* the note is or *what* the note is."

"If there is anything you cannot do after a fair trial, either there is something the matter with your hand, or with the way you are practising."

"If your wrists are weak, go and roll the grass in the garden."

"If you want to develop strength and sensitiveness in the tips of your fingers, use them in every-day life. For instance, when you go out for a walk, hold your umbrella with the tips instead of in the palm of your hand."

"Practise your technical exercises on a cushion or upon a table sometimes. You do not always need the piano to strengthen your muscles."

And so on, intermingling advice with illustration, until the lesson becomes as entertaining as instructive.

When all goes well, a lesson with Leschetizky is a really wonderful experience. His point of view is so interesting, the depth of his comprehension so profound, his power of clear exposition so great, the parallels he draws between art and life so unexpected, that his listener is held under a spell of wondering enthusiasm throughout. Both his ear and his memory are very remarkable. He is able to retain accurately in his mind every detail in a piece of music on hearing it for the first time; and not only to play it through immediately afterwards, but to discuss points in it, making a suggestion here, an alteration there, exactly as if the music were before his eyes. He plays a great deal during the lesson in a fragmentary way, but rarely anything straight through. His piano is on the left of the pupil, the two instruments standing side by side, their keyboards level.

He sits very still and very straight, never stooping over the keys, or swaying about. His hands, often partially resting on the notes, are almost flat, the wrists low, the fingers doing all

the work, his whole figure taut with the tension of concentrated thought.

His playing is as difficult to describe as himself, for it is the translation of his nature into sound. Then, as at no other time, his varied temperament discloses itself, its contrasts finding in music their best interpretation. These sonorous chords weighed out by so masterful a hand; this steady beat of measured emphasis; the lilt and swing of the rhythm; the fine-pointed staccato; the piquant charm with which the dainty notes come dancing off the keys; the melancholy tenderness of the soft caressing tone, stealing in unawares—these tell the story, more faithfully than any other language, of his nature, not only as a musician, but as a man.

CHAPTER VI

THE CLASS

At five o'clock on a Wednesday afternoon the pupils begin to assemble for the class. For the time being, the salon, crammed with chairs, has the appearance of a concert-hall; the seats for the students, who number over two hundred, cover the whole floor; there is not an inch of room to spare.

In former days when there were but fifty or so, the class was quite informal. Given solely for the pupils, it had the character of a private lesson. Each one played what he knew, and had it corrected just as though he were alone; except that the corrections were probably fewer and less detailed. No strangers were admitted then, as the object of the class was work, and Leschetizky found that the presence of outsiders limited his freedom in criticism. The pupils were forbidden to clap—because

the less talented became discouraged when they obtained no applause. The shortcomings of the bad pupil were freely commented upon, and discussed comprehensively, without much regard to his feelings, this apparent hard-heartedness being designed as part of the training." "For," said Leschetizky, "if a pupil has not sufficient courage to stand buffetings from me, how will he stand them later on from the world?" No peculiarity escaping his vigilant eye, he forthwith made some appropriate remark about it, and if he found its possessor impervious to a mild hint, very plain words followed.

The Professor knew exactly who was there and who was not, and whoever failed to put in an appearance heard about it at the next lesson. Every one sat where he or she liked, either round the pianos or at the opposite end of the room, where the black sheep were tactfully herded out of sight if possible.

If all went well, and there were many to play, Professor occasionally called "halt!" In the middle of the evening, the music stopped for a few moments and talk and laughter—and sometimes coffee—took its place. A rest was

very necessary in those days, for the class often lasted four or five hours, and no one cared to leave before the end.

When the numbers increased and enlarged this family circle beyond all possibility of intimacy, it lost its private character and was transformed into a kind of concert—a rehearsal, in fact, for public performance.

Now it takes place once a fortnight—formerly once a week—attendance is optional instead of obligatory, and it has been found necessary to ask a fee. Only the best pupils play; the Professor criticises leniently; and guests are very often invited to listen.

Should any great artist be passing through Vienna, Leschetizky is delighted if he can induce him to play at one of these evenings—a somewhat formidable honour, for the audience has been brought up to a very high standard. In truth a great many of the pupils themselves are gifted artists, who have already played in public and know enough to be appreciative in the most valuable sense.

In this respect it differs from all other pianoforte classes, in which, as a rule, the pupils have not yet emerged from the Conser-

vatoire shell into public life. Liszt's class was the nearest approach to it; but this again differed from it, inasmuch as Liszt's gathering was drawn together for the *love* of music, whereas Leschetizky's is entirely for the *study* of music. Tausig founded one on the same lines as Leschetizky, but he had not the patience to carry it on for more than a very short time, in spite of the enormous success it had during its lifetime. Leschetizky's class now stands quite alone, the only assemblage of its kind.

In the year of his Jubilee, 1894, Rubinstein came, and gave the pupils two hours of his best. They have heard Liszt, not only at the class, but unofficially, for when he came he would often stay on, playing for them to dance to afterwards. Naturally Mme. Essipoff frequently played. A fragment from the diary of one of Leschetizky's pupils tells of one particularly delightful time: "After the two English girls had played—(Miss Rihll, Leschetizky's 'Wellen und Wogen' Etuden, and Miss Goodson Rameau's 'Gavotte and Variations in A minor," which they did wonderfully well, for the first time) — Professor

went upstairs to find Mme. Essipoff. She came down a few moments later, and gave us the 'Handel-Brahms Variations.' It was one majestic sweep from beginning to end. Professor sat quite still the whole time, drinking it in, his face lit up with tender pride as he listened. When she rose from the piano he took both her hands and kissed them reverently, but without a single word, for he could not speak, and his eyes were full of tears." The Professor very seldom becomes visibly enthusiastic. It takes a great deal to draw more than "gut, ganz gut" and a little nod out of him; but when by any chance he *is* roused to show his satisfaction, he shows it in a whole-hearted outpouring of praise, immediately explaining to every one exactly why he finds the performance so good.

To attend the class when the best pupils play is a delightful and interesting experience. The diary, already quoted, contains an account of one such occasion:—"Now began the really exciting part of the evening, for it was little Mark Hambourg's turn. He marched up to the piano and sat down as usual, with a jerk, looking like a juvenile thundercloud. They

LESCHETIZKY AND MARK HAMBOURG

went right through the Hummel Septet together (Professor taking the second piano part) in such perfect sympathy that one could hardly distinguish one from the other. Mark excelled himself to-night and put every one else in the shade. There seems to be nothing he cannot do, and his electricity is absolutely phenomenal. When he stopped, we burst into a storm of applause, but, grim little hero that he is, he was off into the dining-room almost before we began to clap. Professor turned round to us and murmured, 'he has a future—he *can* play.' The salon was quite dark except where Professor sat at the piano. He looked most strange. The light from above caught the silver in his hair and made his head sparkle every time he moved. His eyes gleamed like two red-brown balls, and though he was absolutely motionless you could see he was quivering with intensity."

"It was the last class this year, and in spite of Madame Donnimirska's protests that there was not enough to go round, Professor insisted on several of us staying to supper. We were all too excited and exhausted to eat much, but he was as gay and lively as if he had just got up, instead of having given a four hours' class;

and some of the boys had to stay and play billiards with him. They are probably at it still, for it is only 3 A.M."

The class is cosmopolitan. A patchwork of nationalities, where no one element permanently prevails. Held in an Austrian city, there are but few Austrians there; at present Americans in great numbers, a few English, many Russians and Poles, one or two French, Germans, an occasional Italian or Swede, a sprinkling of the Balkan nations, rarely a Greek or a Spaniard. This motley crew interests Leschetizky immensely. He catalogues them all, and knows by the country whence the specimen hails what its gifts are likely to be.

From the English he expects good musicians, good workers, and bad executants; doing by work what the Slav does by instinct; their heads serving them better than their hearts.

The Americans he finds more spontaneous. Accustomed to keep all their faculties in readiness for the unexpected, their perceptions are quick, and they possess considerable technical facility. They study perhaps more for the sake of being up to date than for the love of music.

The Russians stand first in Leschetizky's opinion. United to a prodigious technique, they have passion, dramatic power, elemental force, and extraordinary vitality. Turbulent natures, difficult to keep within bounds, but making wonderful players when they have the patience to endure to the end.

The Pole, less strong and rugged than the Russian, leans more to the poetical side of music. Originality is to be found in all he does; refinement, an exquisite tenderness, and instinctive rhythm.

The French he compares to birds of passage, flying lightly up in the clouds, unconscious of what lies below. They are dainty, crisp, clear-cut in their playing, and they phrase well.

The Germans he respects for their earnestness, their patient devotion to detail, their orderliness, and intense and humble love of their art. But their outlook is a little grey.

The gentle Swedes, in whom he finds much talent, are more sympathetic to him; and the Italian he loves, because he *is* Italian—though he cannot, as a rule, play the piano in the very least.

"Ah! what a marvel I could make, could I mix you all up!" he says; "what a marvel I could make!" So many of his pupils have become famous that it is not possible to speak of more than a few. The few shall be those already known to England.

Paderewski, Slivinski, Friedmann represent Poland. Mark Hambourg—whom Rubinstein pointed out as his successor—Gabrilowitch, Mme. Essipoff, and Mme. Stepanoff are from Russia. Fanny Bloomfield—"my electric wonder"—Otto Voss, Ethel Newcomb, from America. Helen Hopekirk—"the finest woman musician I have ever known"—is from Scotland. Paula Sjalit, and Schütt—best known as a composer—are Austrians; Schwabel and Richard Buhlig are Germans; Franchetti is an Italian. Katherine Goodson—one of the best pupils Leschetizky has ever had—Evelyn Suart, Marie St. Angelo, Douglas Boxall, Ada Thomas, Frank Merrick, and Ethel Liggins are all English.

CHAPTER VII

THE CENTRE OF THE CIRCLE

Of Leschetizky's interests apart from his career there is little to be said. They are but the accompaniment to the song. His pupils are the axle on which his thoughts turn, the rule by which his day is measured. About twelve o'clock he comes down to his work, devoting the early hour to the less gifted, or to the beginners, in order to give them the benefit of his most tranquil frame of mind. The lessons last an hour or more, according to the virtue of the pupil and the Professor's own mood. Very often, having forgotten all about time, he goes on till some one comes in with a gentle reminder that another patient on the verge of nervous prostration is waiting for him in the study. Nominally he takes three pupils in the day, but sometimes after dinner a spare hour or two is filled up by some one who

studies with him unofficially. Knowing how difficult it is for some of the poorer pupils to find money to pay their expenses, if it comes to his knowledge that any of them are in need of funds, he is sure to find some tactful and charming way of playing Santa Claus. For one whom he loved, a little bank was piled up week by week, the Professor putting aside the fees as he received them throughout the whole period of study. When the time was over and the boy, packed and ready to start on his journey, went to say good-bye, out came the treasure—"just a souvenir"—to speed him on his way.

Most of the pupils who come back for a periodic polish receive the privilege of friendship, and Leschetizky is quite hurt if they dare to raise the question of payment: "Am I not your friend, then? Why do you bring me this?"

Everything concerning the students is of interest to him. He likes to know how they live, how they spend their day, who they see apart rom their musical life—not in the least from a sense of domestic responsibility towards them, but rather from a certain naïve, child-

LESCHETIZKY AT CARLSBAD

like curiosity, a desire to know all about everything that comes his way.

Few people realise in what an inspiring atmosphere a great teacher's life is passed. The centre of an ever-changing stream of ardent young natures, filled with high aspiration, he is always in contact with the human being at its noblest and happiest, when life is still a fairy-tale, tinged with the promise of a marvellous future. Bound up in the service of their art, confident of reaching the goal they have promised themselves, these boys and girls form a constant inspiration to those who dwell in their midst, and make every other world seem prosaic and dull beside their own. Living in such a circle and finding therein all the novelty he needs, Leschetizky sees little of outside society now.

Though he is seventy-five he can still tire out most of his friends. He seems to possess an inexhaustible power of renewing his energies and remaining eternally young. Day after day, giving out the nervous force of two ordinary people, he yet holds a fund in reserve.

After the day's work is over he can entertain a table-full of people for several hours in the

evening, begin to play billiards at midnight, go to bed at 3 or 4 a.m., and turn up fresh for the lesson next morning at 12. After breakfast it is his habit to go out for an hour or so with his dog, not so much for the sake of exercise as to calm and refresh his mind. He does nothing special to keep himself elastic and vigorous; gymnastics, he says, are excellent in theory, but what intelligent person could possibly put them into practice? "Imagine wasting twenty minutes a day shooting out one's arms and legs into positions nobody uses in every-day life!"

About four o'clock the lessons are over, and the Professor is ready for dinner; afterwards he usually goes to some café in the town, and often, if there are no billiards or cards at home, stays there chatting and smoking till long after midnight. The thought of a quiet evening at home fills him with dismay. Brilliantly-lit halls, bright colours, laughter, and gaiety are the very breath of life to him. He explores every form of entertainment, serious or frivolous, that he can find. He even enjoys a crowd.

When he was in London one of his greatest

pleasures was to ride into the City on the top of an omnibus, watching the life of the streets as he went. He liked the turmoil and the stir and the endless vista of new faces.

Yet he loves outdoor life. Often in the summer-time he and some of his favourite pupils make long excursions together, and spend delightful hours on the hills, far away from the noise of the town; and there for awhile, sitting idle beneath the lights and shades of the beeches, they listen to the whispering of the stirring branches. In winter there are sleigh-rides, the skaters to watch, and festivals to be kept both at home and abroad.

Leschetizky spends Christmas in the old-fashioned German way, enjoying it afresh each time it comes round. For a week beforehand he is hard at it, buying gifts, tying them up, writing on names, choosing the tree, ordering the candles, bustling about and making everybody's life a burden, in order that everything should be quite perfectly and beautifully done. All this is a profound secret to every one else in the house. When the evening comes, the guests are hurried upstairs on their arrival, lest they should catch a premature glimpse of the

wonderful things prepared for them below. Presently the organ peals, the doors of the salon are thrown open, and they go down, passing in silently and carefully, for everything is dark inside, and in the dimness only the outline of a shadowy figure seated at the organ is visible. The music, soft at first, grows gradually louder, brighter, and more triumphant, until suddenly, when it swells out into a glory of sound, some one draws back the curtain of the inner room ; and the tree, sparkling in a blaze of light, is disclosed to view. No one speaks until the music dies away, and Leschetizky closes the organ to break the spell. "Now for the presents! The youngest first." Notepaper, fans, paper-knives, gloves, calendars, a silk blouse—every sort of gift is there, each chosen specially for the donee with much care and thought by the Father Christmas of the ceremonies. Congratulations over, chairs are cleared away, rugs taken up and the room made ready for dancing till supper, Leschetizky playing for at least part of the evening. Toasts, speeches, stories, and laughter fill the hours till early morning, when, about 5 a.m., a happy, but exhausted, procession streams homeward,

THE PROFESSOR'S BIRTHDAY

stopping on the way at some café—if it is not yet 6 o'clock—to make sure the hall-porter, with his dripping candle and everlasting demand for his ten-kreutzer fee, will be safely gone to his lair.

Leschetizky's birthday, his Name-Day, New Year, and Twelfth Night, are all opportunities for festivals; so, too, in a small way, are the fortnightly suppers after the class.

Entering completely into all that is going on, Leschetizky is a most delightful host; the very embodiment of fun, his presence in itself is entertainment enough. As a *raconteur* he stands almost unrivalled, and his powers of mimicry are in themselves sufficient to justify a career. He is the most appreciative of listeners and the easiest of guests, finding pleasure in everything, charming and genial from first to last.

Aristocrat in life, as well as in music, he exacts from those around him gentle manners and delicate observances. The rough diamond does not attract him. His natural love of order desires everything to be in its place and suitable to the moment.

Leschetizky is of small build, extremely wiry

and highly-strung, magnetic from top to toe. The whole man is charged with electricity, which sparkles out of him whenever anything evokes it. He gives the impression of being the very essence of nervous force, rather than the possessor of great physical energy. A certain aristocratic spirit reveals itself in the fierceness of his eye, and in his short quick step. Of iron will, he waits for no man. He knows what he wants and intends to have it. He is, in fact, peremptory. His orders must be carried out instantly. If the slave is not up to time—off with his head! If he imagines any one to be endowed with a certain characteristic, nothing will dissuade him from the notion. Whether the person really has this quality or not is beside the question. Leschetizky's imagination is so strong that it entirely obliterates reality, and the idea that has taken hold of his mind for the time being becomes so fixed that argument to the contrary is worse than useless. Justice implies dispassionate criticism, and this he reserves for musical matters only.

Like all individualistic natures he desires the monopoly of certain emotions. He may

be sad, but others must not be so. Whatever their inward thoughts, externally they must be gay. He must be weaned from sadness. The sight of a dismal face affects his entire mood. He would ignore the darker side of things entirely, if he could. Not because his is a frivolous or superficial nature, merely varied by an occasional streak of earnestness, as the whimsical flitting to and fro of his fancies might suggest, but because he is a man upon whom has flashed at moments a certain comprehension of the unfathomable mystery of the world, and who would fain turn away from its solemn to its lighter aspects.

He has experienced ill winds and dark days, but they have made him neither cynical nor old, nor yet resigned. There is no trace of the philosopher in his composition. Platitudes about the imperfection of human life, or the need of endurance, bore him inexpressibly. He cannot enter into the emotions of the middle-aged. Years have not in the least tempered the eagerness of his outlook. He drinks of life now as fervently as in his youth

Mobile and impressionable, therefore always ready for a new friend, at the same time he

holds loyally to the comrades of old—a rare combination in a nature of this type.

Like all people of strong constitution, he lives in continual expectation of death; a cold in his head—he is a doomed man; a little extra fatigue—his days are closing in; a slight cough—he is ready to say good-bye. But sympathy will do much to woo him back to health; a sweet face will tide him over the danger, and a good story even restore him to life.

Transparent as a child, his face is the index of his mood. There—and indeed not only there, but in his whole figure, which unconsciously obeys the trend of his mind—his thoughts are inevitably reflected. In two or three moments he will become as many different people; dry, derisive, dejected, gentle, earnest, even tender—his waywardness is difficult to follow. It is rare to meet with a temperament so rich in contrasts, so full of unexpected developments. He lives a thousand lives, going through sufficient experiences in a year to enrich an ordinary person's lifetime. Yet beneath this kaleidoscopic surface lie those qualities that have made his work what it is: unfailing patience, earnestness, inflexible will,

keen interest, and complete, unswerving concentration.

His whole being is bound up in his music, and his ideals of it are as bright now as they were fifty years ago. The Principles of Music Study are to him as important and interesting as the Principles of the Universe were to Newton or Herbert Spencer; and it is this firm belief in the necessity of his work, and his loving devotion to it, that have made him the greatest teacher of the piano that the world has ever had.

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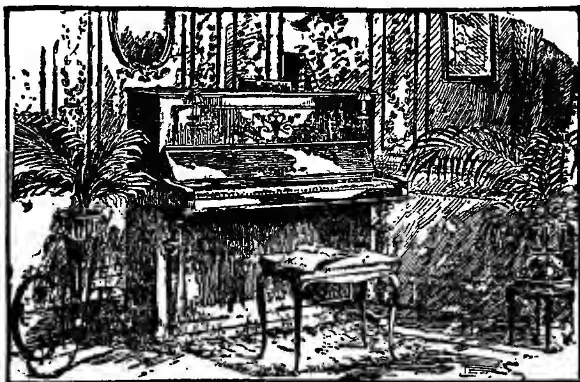

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